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PRRC emerging trends

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RELIGION & POLITICS: VOTERS SPEAK

PRINCETON, N.J. — Efforts of religious leaders to tell voters which presidential candidate they should or should not vote for do not sit well with the majority of American voters, judging from the following survey evidence:

1. By a 2-to-1 margin, voters say it is wrong for religious groups actively to work for the defeat of candidates who don't agree with their position on certain issues.

2. By a similar margin, voters told the Gallup Poll that it was wrong for a Roman Catholic Cardinal to tell his parishioners not to vote for candidates who favor abortion. Recently, the Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, had a pastoral letter read in the churches of his diocese saying it was sinful to vote for political candidates who favored abortion. In the survey, Catholics disagree with the Cardinal's statement to almost the same extent as does the total population.

Here is the first question asked in the survey:

"Certain religious groups are actively working for the defeat of political candidates who don't agree with their position on certain issues. Do you think they are right or wrong to do this?"

Analysis of the survey results shows that supporters of the leading presidential candidates lean heavily to the view that it is wrong for religious groups to work for the defeat of candidates who don't line up on their side of key issues.

Church members and regular churchgoers are somewhat more inclined to say it is right for religious groups to follow this practice than are non-church members and non-churchgoers, but majorities of the more religiously active public oppose the involvement of religious groups in political activities.

Here is the second question asked:

"A Catholic Cardinal recently said that it was a sin to vote for political candidates who favor abortion. Do you think the Cardinal was right or wrong to make this statement?"

The results reported today are based on in-person interviews with 1,593 adults, 18 and older, conducted in more than 300 scientifically-selected localities across the nation during the period October 10-13.

For results based on a sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be three percentage points in either direction.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CANDIDATES

	Right	Wrong	Undecided
NATIONAL	28%	60%	12%
Catholics	32	57	11
Protestants	28	62	10
Supporters of:			
Reagan-Bush	30	59	11
Carter-Mondale	26	62	12
Anderson-Lucey	30	61	9
Church members	31	58	11
Non-members	21	64	15
Attend church regularly	33	54	13
Do not attend regularly	23	65	12

CARDINAL'S STATEMENT

	Right	Wrong	Undecided
NATIONAL	27%	59%	14%
Catholics	33	55	12
Protestants	26	61	13
Supporters of:			
Reagan-Bush	26	63	11
Carter-Mondale	30	57	13
Anderson-Lucey	20	74	6
Church members	30	57	13
Non-members	20	64	16
Attend church regularly	34	52	14
Do not attend regularly	22	64	14

More Today Confident In Church

PRINCETON, N.J. – Since 1977 the proportion of Americans who express "a great deal" of confidence in the church or organized religion has increased from 38 to 44%.

The latest survey shows 44% giving this response, 22% saying they have "quite a lot" of confidence in organized religion, 20% "some," 8% "very little," and 3% "none."

The survey, in which public confidence in 10 key U.S. institutions was tested, shows organized religion ranking highest. The other nine tested: banks and banking, the military, the public schools, newspapers, the U.S. Supreme Court, television, organized labor, Congress and big business.

SHARP DIFFERENCES NOTED BY AGE

Sharp differences in the current survey are found on the basis of age of survey respondents, with 55% of persons 50 and older saying they have a "great deal" of confidence in organized religion, compared to 42% among those who are 30-49 years old and 32% of those between the ages of 18 and 29.

An earlier survey of *teen-agers* showed even fewer, 25%, saying they have "a great deal" of confidence in the church or organized religion.

Following is the question:

"I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Would you tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one – a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?"

Following is the trend since 1977 in the proportion saying they have "a great deal" of confidence in the church or organized religion:

HAVING 'A GREAT DEAL' OF CONFIDENCE IN CHURCH

1980	44%
1979	40
1977	38

An uptrend in positive attidues is noted among both Protestants and Catholics, as seen in the following tables:

– Responses of Protestants –

1980	49%
1979	46
1977	43

– Responses of Catholics –

1980	46%
1979	37
1977	40

One of the most dramatic uptrends by groups is found among persons with college training, as seen in the following table:

HAVING 'A GREAT DEAL' OF CONFIDENCE IN CHURCH

– Persons with college training –

1980	39%
1979	33
1977	26

The accompanying table shows the latest results by several major population groups. The latest results reported today are based on in-person interviews with 1,593 adults, 18 and older, interviewed in person in more than 300 scientifically-selected localities across the nation during the period October 10-13.

PERCENT EXPRESSING 'A GREAT DEAL' OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CHURCH OR ORGANIZED RELIGION (1980 RESULTS)

	Great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None	Don't know
NATIONAL	44%	22%	20%	8%	3%	3%
Men	40	23	22	9	3	3
Women	48	21	18	8	2	3
East	35	28	24	9	3	1
Midwest	52	21	16	7	1	3
South	50	19	16	9	2	4
West	36	18	26	10	6	4
Under 30 years	32	27	27	8	4	2
30-49 years	42	20	19	13	3	3
50 & over	55	20	16	4	2	3
College	39	25	22	11	1	2
High school	45	22	20	8	3	2
Grade school	51	17	15	6	5	6
Protestants	49	21	20	6	1	3
Roman Catholics	46	25	21	7	1	*
Church members	54	23	16	4	1	2
Non-members	22	19	30	18	7	4
Regular church-goers	63	22	10	2	1	2
Non-regular	30	22	28	13	4	3

* Less than one percent

6 In 10 Teens Rate Honesty of Clergy as "Very High" or "High"

PRINCETON, N.J. – Medical doctors, the clergy, college teachers and lawyers are the only occupational groups of eight tested that are rated very high or high for their honesty and ethics.

Fairly far behind these are U.S. Senators, Congressmen, journalists and business executives.

Six in 10 give the clergy a "very high" or "high" rating in terms of honesty and ethical standards.

Most likely to give clergy such a rating are older teens, students whose academic standings are above average, and teens who live in the South.

This question was asked in a survey conducted by telephone with 1,003 teenagers in May:

"How would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields – very high, high, average, low or very low?"

Following are the very high or high ratings given persons in each of the eight occupations tested.

Medical doctors	65%
Clergy	62
College teachers	57
Lawyers	54
Senators	36
Congressmen	35
Journalists	31
Business executives	27

The following table shows high or high ratings given the clergy by groups:

VERY HIGH/HIGH RATINGS GIVEN THE CLERGY

National	62%
Boys	61
Girls	62
13-15 years old	57
16-18 years old	66
Academic standing:	
Above average	68
Below average	53
East	62
Midwest	61
South	66
West	56

THE PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER

– Statement of Purpose –

The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding, through scientifically-conducted surveys, of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the United States and abroad.

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It is hoped that this information will contribute to greater understanding and improved relations among the many religions in our pluralistic society.

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The PRRC exists solely to provide as accurate information as possible on the changing religious scene and does not espouse a particular religion, movement, or cause.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE AMONG BLACK ADULTS

PRINCETON, N.J. – Blacks living in the Southern states are better churchgoers than are blacks living outside the South, with 51% of Southern blacks attending church in a typical week of 1979 compared to 39% of blacks living outside the South.

Nationwide 44% of blacks attended church on the average during 1979. The figure for the total adult population of all races during last year was 40%.

To measure the average attendance during 1979, surveys of the representative samples of the adult population were made in eight selected weeks during the year. A total of more than 12,000 adults, 18 and older, were interviewed in person including interviews with more than 1200 blacks. This question was asked:

"Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days?"

The results show attendance to be highest among Southern blacks, women, persons with only a grade school background, older blacks, and those living in smaller communities:

Percent of Blacks Attending Church in Typical Week of 1979

TOTAL	44%
Southern blacks	51
Blacks outside South	39
Men	37
Women	50
College background	44
High school	43
Grade school	48
18 29 years old	32
30 - 49 years old	44
50 and older	55
City size:	
1,000,000 and over	42
500,000 - 999,999	41
50,000 - 499,999	43
2,500 - 49,999	51
Under 2,500	50

Focus On Youth

1 in 3 Teens Say Religion Outmoded

PRINCETON, N.J. – Although more than half of American teen-agers believe religion can answer all or most of today's problems, as many as one teen in three feels religion is largely old-fashioned and out-of-date.

However, although many teens feel that *organized* religion, in the institutional sense is not relevant, most continue to believe in the basic ethical and moral precepts taught by the churches and synagogues in the U.S.

This concept is supported by another finding from the same Gallup Youth Survey: an overwhelming 79 percent majority of teen-agers believe that the 10 Commandents are still valid rules for living in the world today. Only 17 percent feel that they are irrelevant.

Somewhat greater skepticism about religion's ability to help people cope with their everyday problems is expressed by teen-age boys, whites, teens from white-collar occupational backgrounds, those whose parents were college-educated, Catholics, and teens living in the East and far West.

Conversely, a greater degree of faith in the power of religion is voiced by girls, blacks, teens from blue-collar backgrounds, Protestants, and those living in the Midwest and, especially, in the South.

One-half of our teen-age sample had attended church during the week prior to being interviewed. Not surprisingly, many more teen church-goers (75 percent) are confident in religion's power to answer today's problems than are non-churchgoers of whom only 40 percent express a similar amount of faith.

Whether or not they believe in the efficacy of religion, teen-age church or synagogue attendance is substantially higher than it is among adults. The latest Gallup Poll audit shows that 40 percent of adults nationwide attended church or synagogue in a typical week – and that percentage drops sharply among young adults, 18 to 24 years of age, with only one out of four attending religious services in an average week.

Teen-age church attendance tends to follow the pattern described earlier of those who believe in religion's ability to solve today's problems. That is, more apt to be regular churchgoers are girls, black teens of both sexes, and teens living in the Midwest and South.

There are, however, some important and interesting deviations from this general pattern. Although no significant difference was found in the percentages of older and younger teens believing in religion as an answer to today's problems, church attendance is higher among younger (13-15 years old) than it is among older (16-18 years old) teens. Similarly, more Catholics youths (57 percent) attend church weekly than do Protestants (52 percent), but a far greater faith in the power of religion is exhibited by Protestants than by Catholic young people, 67 and 52 percent, respectively.

The same 49 percent proportion of regular churchgoers is recorded for teens from both white-collar and blue-collar occupational backgrounds, yet more teens from blue-collar than from white-collar homes believe relgion can answer all or most of today's problems.

Following is the question asked about the influence of religion:

"Do you believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems or that religion is largely old-fashioned and out of date?"

The key findings are found in the accompanying table.

Findings are based on 1,003 telephone interviews, conducted in May, with a representative national cross-section of teen-agers, ages 13 to 18. Highlights are shown in the accompanying table.

CAN RELIGION ANSWER TODAY'S PROBLEMS?

	Yes	No	Not sure
NATIONAL	57%	32%	11%
Boys	56	34	10
Girls	59	29	12
Both sexes:			
13-15 years old	58	31	11
16-18 years old	57	32	11
Whites	56	33	11
Blacks	70	21	9
Protestants	67	23	10
Catholics	52	37	11
White-collar background	54	34	12
Blue-collar background	61	29	10
East	47	42	11
Midwest	61	28	11
South	68	21	11
West	52	37	11
Church attenders	75	18	7
Non-attenders	40	46	14

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative, actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one year subscription can be obtained for $20; inquire: **Publications Department, 53 Bank Street, Princeton, N.J. 08540 (Telephone: 609-924-2809). PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.**